

Rethinking Public Art: A Kantian Critique

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photo: Esther Simpson

This paper proposes a repositioning of the debate surrounding public art within a broader critique of the question of access to art. This is part of a radical attempt to reinstall aesthetic experience at the heart of political debates about the administration and funding of art. The contemporary moment in Britain, shaped by New Labour, is such that artists and institutions alike are confronted with the challenge of producing and displaying works of art in a climate where the visual arts form part of what are known as the cultural industries and are central to the government's broader socio-economic and political project. Coupled with this is the challenge of making art outside the space of regulation, when in fact no such space exists. Art is expected to deliver returns on a massive investment in the sector, which reflects an unprecedented attention to culture.¹ The return to aesthetics, surprising as it may be, provides a way to challenge the measures that are in place to evaluate these returns. The emphasis on access in cultural policy is presented as the ideological opposite to exclusion and elitism, and is therefore very difficult to reproach. Any attack on access is seen as equivalent to an attack on culture and is understood as a social and moral crusade.

Within a range of disciplines, it has been argued that the dichotomy between public and private is an artificial construct.² However, this dichotomy continues to prevail in political rhetoric surrounding the arts, which presents the public as a fully inclusive and coherent category, even

if this category is predicated on exclusion. From the public house to the public highway, the public school to the public company, the term "public" involves exclusions at one level or another. "Public" designates different, often conflicting things at different times and in different contexts. Its use in relation to art is particularly slippery, yet it persists as a powerful political and ideological tool, a category that determines who is to be served by a particular practice or discourse in a democracy. The regulation of the funding of art and its visibility is designed with the "public good" in mind, and it is taken as given that the publicness of an art object can be evaluated according to the intrinsic attributes of the object: its form or subject of inquiry, its location, the makeup of its audience, or its intellectual accessibility. Aesthetics offers the possibility of changing this debate by ruling out from the start the object and its attributes as a viable arena of investigation.

Such a proposition, however, is not without its difficulties. Given that the climate from the late 1990s onwards privileges notions of community and the personal, any form of impersonality is seen as a social evil. This is a climate that regards as public only art involving social intervention. Furthermore, aesthetics has effectively been abandoned because of its perceived separation from the social. In 1985, Hal Foster questioned whether aesthetic categories—the subjective and the universal—could still be considered valid.³ He was contemplating

the threat of mass production to subjective taste (and by subjective, he meant personal) on the one hand and the threat of the “rise of other cultures” to a universal vision on the other. Foster’s critical postmodernism introduced an anti-aesthetic position deeply embedded in structuralist and poststructuralist theory, and conceived of subjectivity as historically contingent and aesthetic affect as socially produced. The perceived discord between aesthetics and the debate surrounding the publicness of art is further enhanced by the fact that the “public art movement” emerged in reaction to a series of pseudo-Kantian arguments; arguments arising from misguided interpretations of Immanuel Kant’s principles of disinterestedness and subjective universality. In fact, public art relied heavily on an argument that rejected aesthetics outright.

The adoption of a Kantian position does not necessarily entail a wholesale defence or reconstruction of Kant’s aesthetic theory. Here, Kant’s aesthetic philosophy is used strategically to justify an alternative approach to culture to that espoused by government. Kant’s argument that aesthetic experience serves as the basis for an idea of community not grounded in empirical reality potentiates a critique that challenges the governmental orthodoxy that undervalues aesthetic activity and could furthermore remove some of the limitations placed on the production of art.

Kant’s Aesthetics and the Community

Kant proposed that a sense of a community comes into being with a particular type of aesthetic judgment: the judgment upon the beautiful, or a judgment of taste. Such a judgment is subjective inasmuch as it is based on the experience of pleasure, but it uses the grammar of objectivity: “this is beautiful.” This indicates that there is a demand for the general validity of the judgment built into the judgment itself. The objective of Kant’s aesthetic theory was to seek the source of this general validity, universality, which is by definition not rooted in attributes particular to the object itself. If the source of universality was to be found in attributes of the object itself, then the judgment would not be aesthetic, but theoretical, and hence capable of being arrived at by rational persuasion, a judgment mediated by concepts that are external to it. A judgment of taste, however, is based on an unmediated experience of pleasure or displeasure.

This fundamental Kantian stipulation of disinterestedness or unmediated judgment—a relationship to the subject that, in Kant’s words, has “no concept of an end”—requires that external conditions outside the judgment

do not come to bear on it. In Freud’s terms, it is impossible to approach an object without interest, since our relationship to all objects is invested with desire, therefore affecting all representations. If desire governs our relationship both to objects and to representations, how is it possible to make a judgment that is singular and subjective, yet disinterested?

Kant understands interest as a system of desire that meets with gratification, a relation in which the “real existence of the object” has an effect on the state of the subject.⁴ He argues that when there is interest, desire must be met with gratification. Freud mapped out two distinct economies: need and satisfaction on the one hand, and desire and representation on the other. In the first, need is met with gratification because need is provoked by the intrinsic attributes of the object. The domain of representation, however, involves a different state of affairs. A judgment of taste exists in the domain of representation, since beauty does not reside in the object, but in how that object appears to the subject. Therefore, with respect to the judgment upon the beautiful, desire cannot be met. The fact that beauty appears as part of the object, because of its claim to universality, can make such objects emerge as objects of desire, but this desire cannot be satisfied because beauty is part of the representation and not of the object.

Disinterestedness strips the subject of everything that makes her the particular person she is. Specific notions of a person in a sociological sense—gender, ethnicity, and class, for example—are irrelevant to Kant’s notion of the disinterested subject, which is stripped to a bare humanity shared in common with others. Disinterestedness insists that the subject judges from a position in which all subjects are the same. It is essentially a form of self-alienation of the subject by way of representation. According to Dieter Henrich, this is a particular form of reflection that takes place, and must take place, independently of any explicit awareness.⁵ It is not a condition into which a subject can enter on command; it is a condition triggered purely by way of being confronted with an art object that is so encompassing it makes it possible for the subject to be “lost” inside it.⁶ The possibility of becoming so completely absorbed in an object outside of ourselves requires that we abandon the very part of ourselves that makes us particularly us.

The fundamental distinction between the subjective and the personal is difficult to make in our culture, but it is nevertheless a crucial Kantian distinction. For Kant, an aesthetic experience is subjective, but it places a systematic limitation on the personal. This gap between the personal

and the subjective is what allows Kant to postulate a community of subjectivity as against communities of personal attributes, and it is central to the critique of public art I am proposing.

For Kant's disinterested subject, the judgment of taste must be regarded as "resting on what we must also presuppose is in every other person."⁷ So not only do we believe our feelings of pleasure or displeasure to be communicable to another, but also that there is a necessity, almost a duty, involved in doing so. Communicating a judgment of taste by using the grammar of objectivity, "this is beautiful" (as if the aesthetic quality of beauty was part of the object), constitutes a demand for the agreement of others.

This demand for the agreement of others in a judgment of taste merely serves as a template for something that could be possible. It is not that we demand that everyone must ultimately judge as we do and therefore agree with us, but rather that the agreement of others is something taken into account when we utter the judgment. It is not the case that because I have said "this is beautiful" then others must agree with me for reasons external to the judgment (for example, that I may be more powerful or knowledgeable). The demand for agreement is not weakened when our judgment is not met with the agreement of others. Furthermore, even if the judgment of others is found to contradict our own and makes us question our own judgment, it can never convince us of our being wrong, since "there is no empirical *ground of proof* that can coerce any one's judgment of taste."⁸

This demand for agreement is what Kant calls "universal communicability" in a judgment of taste. He argues that only cognition is capable of being universally communicated. What is being communicated is the judgment, which rests not only on the feeling of pleasure or displeasure as delivered by the senses, but equally on a sense of reflection that functions in the process of forming a judgment. In other words, if taste is a subjective power of judgment, insofar as it rests on a singular original feeling of pleasure, or indeed displeasure, judgment is a priori insofar as the faculty of judgment itself is based on a universal principle. How are these two positions—the subjective and the universal—to be reconciled?

In the "Analytic of the Sublime," Kant refers to this principle that determines the feeling of pleasure or displeasure in a judgment of taste as *sensus communis*.⁹ According to this principle, when the subject contemplates beauty, reflection upon the social is taken into account a priori. The subjective feeling opens on to the social by way of reflection on a universal communicability;

taste is the "the faculty of estimating what makes our feeling in a given representation *universally communicable* without the mediation of a concept."¹⁰ By saying "this is beautiful" and thereby introducing a universal claim, a space is opened for debate in which all judgments of taste have general validity. The demand for agreement evokes the social by postulating the possibility of agreement. Thierry De Duve has expanded on this by saying that the judgment is a paradoxical sharing of the sense of being alone:

What this shared solitude stands for is both a right to judge for yourself and the duty to judge as if you are not alone; and the ability, the "talent" that this calls for is the capacity to read your feelings as if they were objects projected outside of yourself, forces traversing you, social facts.¹¹

Kant's notion of a common or public sense can be characterized as a demand for agreement, where the purpose of this demand is not to achieve consensus. This is possible because for Kant the very possibility of agreement is intrinsic to the essentially subjective feeling of pleasure. Ultimately, this notion of "common sense" suggests that not only is there no denial of the social in aesthetic judgment, but that the invocation of the social is an essential characteristic of aesthetic experience. We conclude from this that, by the very definition of aesthetics, all art is public.

Kant's argument that under the regime of disinterestedness the judgment "this is beautiful" inevitably leads to a certain horizon of universality is frequently misunderstood. It has been mistakenly interpreted to mean that aesthetic judgment is objective. Worse still, this notion of objectivity has been caricatured as a justification for a chart of aesthetic excellence, as if answering Sir Joshua Reynolds' question, posed at the conclusion of *Discourses on Art*, whether Michelangelo or Raphael should be preferred as the highest achievement of art. It is crucial for the argument mounted here that both elements of this misinterpretation—the objectivity of judgment and the possibility of such objectivity leading to a ranking—are recognized as such. The universality of aesthetic judgment implies neither objectivity nor a view of beauty as an inherent property of the work of art. On the contrary, Kant is concerned with a subjective universality. The assumption is that if all spectators have stripped themselves of everything but bare subjectivity, they will agree on the judgment of a work because at this level they are all the same. It is not that empirically Kant expects our

judgment to be identical any more than there is a correct judgment. It is rather that, to the extent that we become purified subjects and less and less differentiated persons, there is a pressure to organize our judgments on a convergent plane.

We can call this unique position spectatorship, a term that holds within it the entire Kantian “package” of aesthetic experience. When the subject is confronted with a work of art, a possible community can emerge that has material bearing on the subject’s relationship with others and the world around. The conventional definition of the community is one that is defined prior to and independently of art; as such, the community is inserted into the museum. But the Kantian notion of subjective universality suggests that aesthetic experience is precisely what creates the community. This allows us to think of the communal as something other than that which is administered through institutions.

Rethinking Ideological Critiques of the Aesthetic

Most theories of the relationship of the spectator to the artwork tend to emphasize and even valorize the internal interest of a subject in the appreciation of an art object. The subject’s relationship to the artwork is thus predicated on the subject’s social attributes and psychological profile, while the artwork itself exists as a certain type of social production. For the theorist, the theory of aesthetics is an ideological construct. For the sociologist, disinterestedness is a bourgeois denial of the social that reinforces class difference. Both the theorist and the sociologist reject aesthetics outright.

In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Terry Eagleton argues that “the aesthetic...is the very paradigm of the ideological.”¹² Inasmuch as a judgment of taste is based on a universal principle derived from the particularity of subjective experience, Eagleton sees in it a concealment of what is essentially “emotive content within a referential form.”¹³ The fact that the motivation behind the aesthetic judgment remains hidden makes its universal claim problematic for Eagleton. For him, aesthetic judgment is merely a personal preference dressed up in the grammar of the objective, which simply serves to camouflage the ideological position from which the subject is judging. He likens the aesthetic judgment “this is beautiful” to a blatantly ideological utterance such as “the Irish are inferior to the British.” Eagleton is pointing to a judgment that is purely subjective but that takes an objective form. The source of the judgment, although hidden, is supposedly based on empirical grounds. Contrary to a Kantian aesthetic judgment, Eagleton’s example, and indeed his

view of aesthetic judgment, stresses agreement as empirically necessary. This emphasis on empirical consensus replaces Kant’s insistence on the possibility of agreement. That an imaginary notion of universality could inform a judgment and so yield material effects is inconceivable for Eagleton.

Eagleton disregards the very possibility of the Kantian notion of a disinterested subject. The Kantian aesthetic merely serves to confirm class society,¹⁴ and the only imaginable disinterested subject would therefore be a classless one, a “spiritualized version of the abstract serialized subject of the market place.”¹⁵ Eagleton’s objection is directed at Kant’s insistence that a judgment of taste has general validity determined through the subject. In maintaining that a judgment of taste is an ideological utterance, Eagleton argues that it not only reflects social power, but also reproduces it. Art is presented as a category that arises through Kant and others in the eighteenth century and becomes a certain type of social production in which social relations are presented in a particular, bourgeois form. To agree that publicness and community could be thought of from within subjectivity would force Eagleton to accede to what he has termed the subject’s “imperial sway.”

Pierre Bourdieu, like Eagleton, assumes a Marxist viewpoint that sees any claim to universality as being part of bourgeois ideology. For Bourdieu, taste functions as a marker of class; a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses cultural competence. Bourdieu tackles the question of the social conditions of cultural practice by looking at which social groups visited art galleries, and by examining the social, economic, and cultural factors that facilitated or hindered this cultural practice.¹⁶ For Bourdieu, aesthetic pleasure, although it appears to exist as an innate, natural pleasure, is in fact a cultivated pleasure, one that is acquired. Moreover, he equates cultural practice with consumption, an act of decoding “which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code.”¹⁷ This leads him to distinguish between the intellectual and the people.

Bourdieu’s project was a response to the popular culture movement in post-war France. His aim was to give a scientific definition of the social conditions of cultural practice so that the policy of cultural democratization could be more effective and realistic. He was concerned with the charismatic nature of the aristocratic notion of culture and consequently with what he saw as the inferior working class notion of culture. Problematically, Bourdieu appeared to share the establishment’s negative characterization of the culture of the

working classes. By “choosing to describe the culture of the working class by always relating it to a dominant culture which relegates it to a situation of inferiority and barbarism,” writes Brian Rigby, “Bourdieu cannot totally escape the charge that he himself is merely replicating the view of the dominant classes.”¹⁸

Regardless of whether aesthetic judgment can be empirically shown to be class-bound as Eagleton and Bourdieu claim, Kant’s argument is pitched at an entirely different level. Kant does not regard either the gallery or the art object as necessarily redemptive from the deformations of class-based forms of consciousness. His contention is that if someone becomes disinterested in the face of the artwork, then the judgment “this is beautiful” comes not from her, as a class-based person, but as a subjective position stripped of its personality (ideology), a judgment made as a representative of pure subjectivity. The disinterested subject is not defined by being a worker, a banker, or a landlord, but by having stripped those aspects away, through a process of self-alienation, to become the bare core of the human.

The argument that the (disinterested) subjective experience is not only different from personal experience but in fact is its opposite is difficult to make in an intellectual culture where the personal and the subjective are thought to be identical. Being a subject as opposed to a person doesn’t simply mean putting one’s personal agendas aside and judging from a balanced position, or, as Eagleton has put it, “[placing one’s] own contingent aversions and appetencies in brackets.”¹⁹ It means that the instance in which a judgment is made is equivalent to the instance of judgment of another pure subjectivity.

There is no doubt that aesthetics is thoroughly intertwined with politics and culture. But Bourdieu’s argument depends on examining all possible arguments about the relationship a person could have with an art object except the very primary relation between a subject and a work of art, or an aesthetic relation (according to Kant). Bourdieu and Eagleton’s criticisms of the Kantian argument are focused primarily on the nature of the subject itself. But as we have seen, Kant’s thesis is not that the subject creates the objective “real” world around her, but that, at the moment that the subject is confronted with a work of art, a possible community can emerge that has a material bearing on the subject’s relationship with others and the world around. The Kantian notion of subjective universality repositions the aesthetic experience of the work of art as the origin of community and reinserts spectatorship into the debate.

Access and the Community

Shortly after New Labour came to power in Britain, Chris Smith, then Secretary of State for the newly-named Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS), announced a new era of cultural reform in Britain. DCMS allotted £290 million to the arts, sports, and heritage charities, together with a share of lottery income allotted to the arts, sports, and heritage charities worth over £200m annually.²⁰ The reforms were to provide, in Smith’s words, “a platform for placing the tourism and creative industries sponsored by the DCMS at the heart of the government’s social and economic agenda—for regeneration, employment, and opportunities for all.”²¹ These reforms were driven by an overwhelmingly instrumental view of the arts. The massive investment was expected to yield returns, and, in keeping with the government’s overall managerial approach, profit and efficient management were two main measures by which the return was to be evaluated.

Access to works of art became the cornerstone of cultural policy,²² functioning simultaneously as a principle of policy—the objective was to encourage more people to use cultural institutions and to experience art—and as a tool to evaluate the success of this objective. Two years later, in a keynote address to the Royal Society of Arts in London, Smith stated that the most important goal of cultural policy was “enabling the greatest possible number of people to experience and enjoy the arts.”²³ He added that “this fundamental purpose—that sometimes goes under the rather dry title of ‘access’—is central to any sensible public policy for the arts.” Broadening the accessibility of the arts was *the* aim, which could only be achieved through subsidy.

This accessibility was to be achieved through the removal of barriers to access to institutions, events, spectacles, and objects, at a geographical, physical, financial, and even intellectual level, with education featuring prominently. The rise in the numbers of those consuming culture and art served in return as a justification for this ideology. Access, assessed through attendance sheets and statistics, is used to portray a society of fully-functioning citizens, inclusive of children and minority groups. This reflects the communitarianism to which New Labour subscribes: one nation with shared values and purpose.²⁴ The public to whom access is directed is understood as a known entity that the arts are intended to represent or reflect in some way.

True, these programs have resulted in projects that display genuine artistic excellence, but it must be acknowledged that the primary aim of access is to identify

those cultural products deemed valuable by government policy-makers and to increase the consumption of these products. This is typified by the governmental demand that national museums attract more children and more visitors from lower socio-economic groups. In 2003, *The Art Newspaper* reported that “UK museums are told their future government subsidy depends on their ability to bring in the poor and minority groups.”²⁵ New funding agreements stipulate that visitors from these groups must rise by eight per cent, and performance targets were set to increase the number of child visitors by a total of seven million. This transfers the logic of TV ratings to the art object, replicating the market categories of supply and demand without regard for the experience of those who are granted access. What is at stake is the question of how the state should organize its financial and institutional support of the arts. This vital question, however, must not be displaced by the different question of the role of the state in encouraging citizens to use cultural institutions and experience art works.

Insofar as the Kantian argument made here bears upon the question of access, it is legitimate to consider phenomena such as overcrowding as an obstacle rather than as a measure of success. Success must be judged according to the maximization of aesthetic pleasure and not by sheer numbers. In an environment where active participation is favoured, spectatorship is unjustly relegated to a form of passive contemplation. One may reasonably argue that standing in front of a painting in silent contemplation is just as active as using a slide in Tate Modern. The desire for high attendance figures coupled with the fear of limiting access by insisting on “ideal” viewing conditions have transformed the experience of standing in front of a painting: an individual is no longer alone in silence, but in the midst of a bustling acoustic soup. Furthermore, once museums achieve their excessive expectations of attendance, they are often obliged to expand. For many British museums, such as the Tate Modern and The National Gallery, increasing visitor numbers without overcrowding is impossible without “further capital improvements.”²⁶ Once this happens, institutions cannot help but reproduce the conditions of an airport, regardless of architecture. Crowd management can take over as one of the primary functions of the institution.

John Walsh, former director of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, has stated that the museum must not simply work to attract an audience, but that the museum must ask itself what kind of experience it is attracting people to.²⁷ Walsh discusses the “distribution”

works of the late Felix Gonzalez-Torres, which include paper stacks and candy spills. In *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)* (1991), a mound of individually-wrapped, multicoloured candies occupies a corner of the exhibition space. The weight of the mound, 175 pounds, corresponds to an ideal body weight and is an allegorical portrait of the artist’s partner, who died of AIDS. Visitors are invited to take a piece of candy, so that the mound diminishes throughout the day (it is replenished overnight). Gonzalez-Torres’s work sets up a relation between the viewer and the work that subverts ideas of ownership and spectatorship. The viewers function as participating spectators who take part of the work into their possession. The work, as Walsh has written, is “a reminder that works of art are at times only partly visible.”²⁸ Significantly, Walsh adds, “[y]ou can only grasp the true nature of Gonzalez-Torres’ pieces—gifts offered and accepted unconditionally ... if you are actually present, in no hurry, with your senses and mind switched on.”²⁹

One might argue that all works of art only come to fully function as art during the encounter with the spectator, and that each brings with it required viewing conditions. Gregor Schneider’s work *Die Familie Schneider* (2004) required isolated and restricted viewing. In this project, Schneider took over two identical neighbouring houses on an East London street and remade the interiors according to his vision. Each was a perfect replica of the other, down to the performers who played out mundane and intimate acts: a woman washing dishes at the kitchen sink, a man masturbating in the shower, and another, positioned in the bedroom corner and covered in a garbage bag. These performances were as fixed as the drab wallpaper and the cigarette butts in the ashtray. Viewings of this work were carefully planned with two people per time slot. Each was instructed to enter one house and then swap after ten minutes. The artist insisted that people only visit the work once. What is important about the viewing subject of this work was not his or her class, gender, or ethnicity, but the simple fact that they “haven’t seen it yet.” The work came into being when actors took their places just before the viewer entered. One might argue that a Vermeer painting purchased by an international bank and stored in a vault also only becomes art when someone sees it.

The implications of the Kantian position are wider yet. The government wishes to enable increasing numbers of people to appreciate art, but it fails to draw a distinction between aesthetic pleasure and education. In Kantian terms, education is a cognitive issue, and, although subjects can be educated in the field of the arts, this

cognition is not the same as aesthetic pleasure. Michel De Certeau has pointed out that while judgment is an autonomous faculty that can be defined, it cannot be learned.³⁰ This assertion raises the question of how one might produce this form of education. Unfortunately, many well-meaning attempts to impress upon children the “relevance” of art are based on trying to reveal connections between the artwork (or the artist) and the individuality of the spectator. From a Kantian point of view, it would be preferable to teach children to understand the practice of becoming disinterested; the practice of a shared solitude, as de Duve has put it—the right to judge for yourself but the duty to do so as if you are not alone.³¹ The aim of art education should be to enable students to recognize that their subjectivity is not the same as their individuality and to understand what it means to *move as a subject into the position of spectatorship*.

The category of aesthetic experience, which has long been rejected by the left either as an ideological mask for the bourgeois character of art (Eagleton) or as the celebration of the refinements of an elite (Bourdieu), returns in this paper not as a form of political obfuscation, but as a justification for a complex and radical agenda of *access*. I am arguing that *access* is determined by the relation between the subject and the art object in a way that constructs a community, rather than one that reflects a community. *Construction*, not *reflection*, was the Enlightenment context of Kant’s aesthetics, and construction must become central to aesthetics again if it aesthetic experience is to be made to apply to a society with mixed forms of property and governance.

NOTES

1 Department of Culture, Media and Sport 167/98, “Chris Smith details biggest ever increase in cultural funding,” 24 July 1998. See also Jo Littler, “Creative accounting: consumer culture, the ‘creative economy’ and the cultural policies of New Labour,” *Cultural Capitalism: Politics after New Labour*, eds., Timothy Bewes and Jeremy Gilbert (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2000), 203–223. Although the sector is currently confronted with significant funding cuts, the system for evaluating returns on investment remains.

2 Feminist scholars, for example, have criticized the construction of a dichotomy between public and private spheres, demonstrating that the construction of public and private in binary opposition are directly linked to women’s exclusion. Susan Baker and Anneke van Doorne-Huiskes, *Women and Public Policy: The Shifting Boundaries Between the Public and Private Spheres* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); Mary Ryan, “Gender and Public Access” and Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 259–288; 109–142. In law, the terms “public law” and “private law” are ambiguous and liable to be applied in conflicting and misleading ways. See Dawn Oliver, *Common Values and the Public-Private Divide* (London: Butterworths, 1999), 10–12.

3 See *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985), first published in the United States as *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983).

4 Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (1790; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), §3, 45.

5 Dieter Henrich, *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 39. While this notion of reflection is perhaps alien to us, Kant assumes it is familiar to everybody and employs many variants of it. It should be noted that reflection is distinct from reflective judgment (judging the universal when only the particular is given). Henrich attempted to address gaps in Kant’s argument concerning this mode of reflection derived from a particular interplay between all faculties. Michel de Certeau’s inspired discussion of “the understanding that knows,” “the reason that desires,” and the faculty of judgment as a formal “composition,” a subjective “equilibrium” of imagining and understanding is relevant here. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (1984; Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 72–76.

6 It is useful to refer here to Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style*, trans. Michael Bullock (1908; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,

1953). Worringer maintained that the essence of all aesthetic experience is the need for self-alienation. He goes on to say that “we are delivered from our individual being as long as we are absorbed into an external object, an external form, with our inner urge to experience.” See in particular pages 23–24, where he discusses the common need and impulse of self-alienation.

7 Kant, §6, 51.

8 Ibid., §33, 140.

9 Ibid., §40, 151–152.

10 Ibid., §40, 153.

11 Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1996), 171–172.

12 Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 93–94.

13 Ibid., 94.

14 Ibid., 97.

15 Ibid., 98.

16 See Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*, trans. Caroline Beattie and Nick Merriman (1966; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) and Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (1979; London: Routledge, 1984).

17 Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 1–2.

18 Brian Rigby, *Popular Culture in Modern France: A Study of Cultural Discourse* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 112–13. Bourdieu’s critics, notably Luce Giard, Michel de Certeau, and Pierre Mayol, attacked his practice of “ethnological” isolation and then a logical inversion (see Rigby, 62). These authors preferred the term “ordinary people” to “working class,” and insisted that they have their own autonomous and creative styles of life, which are not just the negative or second-rate versions of dominant culture nor reducible to functionality and utility. For de Certeau on Bourdieu see *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 45–76. Rigby’s insistence that Bourdieu’s project is very specific to France is salutary, as is his caution about a literal adoption of his ideas as a tool for cultural policy in other countries.

19 Eagleton, 97.

20 DCMS 167/98.

21 DCMS 167/98.

22 DCMS 155/97, “Review of Access to National Museums and Galleries,” 8 December 1997.

23 Christ Smith, “Chris Smith’s challenge to the Arts world—Change the culture of culture.” Keynote address to the Royal Society of Arts London, 22 July 1999. Chris Smith, *Creative Britain* (London: Faber & Faber, 1998).

24 See Jon Rentoul, *Tony Blair* (London: Warner Books, 1997).

25 Martin Bailey, “Museums must attract the disadvantaged or lose money,” *The Art Newspaper*, 12 February 2003, <<http://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/article.asp?idart=11417>> [accessed 18 August 2005].

26 Ibid.

27 John Walsh, “Pictures, Tears, Lights, and Seats,” *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust*, ed. James Cuno (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 98.

28 Ibid., 83.

29 de Duve, 171.